

CONTROLLING THE FOOD SUPPLIES

and bantering prejudice and opposition. When in 1915 the Board of Agriculture tried to induce the farming community to employ female *The land* labour—the lilac sunbonnet brigade³ as they were jocularly hailed in some quarters—it met at first with very little success. There was of course work that had long been done by women on family farms—milking, butter making, poultry keeping, haymaking and the like. But the idea that women could do the ordinary work of a farm called forth bucolic quaffs. This crude merriment roused the ire of the sex, and when a member of the Launceston Board of Guardians publicly declared that women could not do certain forms of *Women* farm work, they challenged his statement *demonstrate* in the Press, and eight competitors turned *their farming* up for a public demonstration at which *skill* they efficiently carried out all the major operations of a farm. This was in March, 1916, and it aroused such interest that a month later a county demonstration was held at Truro, where 43 female competitors appeared and performed seven types of farm work, including harnessing and driving horses in waggons, ploughing, manure spreading and potato planting. The work chosen as a test was all of a kind only to be performed by skilled and sturdy labourers. One of the judges wrote

afterwards :—

" Some of the work was very well done indeed.

The dung-spreading and planting were excellent;

and the way in which several of the competitors

handled the horses in the harrowing and in

the waggons was a surprise to many of the

spectators. . . . I should like to see some of the